United Nations A/60/PV.80

General Assembly

Sixtieth session

Official Records

80th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 9 May 2006, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda item 128 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

The President: I should like to inform members that, since the issuance of document A/60/650 and addenda 1 to 9, the Dominican Republic has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of that information?

It was so decided.

The President: This information will be reflected in document A/60/650/Add.10, to be issued tomorrow morning.

Agenda item 112 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(e) Election of 47 members of the Human Rights Council

The President: The General Assembly will now take up agenda item 112 (e) for the election of 47 members of the Human Rights Council, under the terms of reference as outlined in resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006.

By adopting resolution 60/251 on 15 March, the General Assembly established the Human Rights Council and, by that, further strengthened the United Nations human rights machinery, as mandated by the 2005 world summit outcome. The members of the Assembly agreed to start a new era in the United Nations endeavours to promote and protect human rights. By creating the Human Rights Council as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, they also decided to elevate the institutional standing of the work on human rights.

It is now time to implement that historic achievement. We are here today to elect the first members of the Human Rights Council. The first 47 members will play a crucial role, since they will operationalize and take the first decisions of the Council. I am confident that our colleagues in Geneva will continue to bring the process forward once the members of the Council are elected. It is important that the Council get off to a good start on 19 June.

I am encouraged that, from the start, member States have been guided by the letter and by the spirit of the resolution. The fact that all candidates for election have presented pledges and commitments, in accordance with the resolution, is indeed very encouraging. Those pledges and commitments have been circulated as official documents and posted on the United Nations website to assist members in the election.

I wish to recall that, in accordance with resolution 60/251, when electing members of the

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Council, member States shall take into account the contributions of candidates to the promotion and protection of human rights and their voluntary pledges and commitments made thereto.

We will now proceed to the election, the largest ever conducted in the General Assembly. In connection with this election, a note by the Secretariat has been circulated under the symbol A/INF/60/6.

In accordance with resolution 60/251, the 47 seats shall be distributed among the regional groups as follows: 13 seats for the African Group, 13 seats for the Asian Group, 6 seats for the Eastern European Group, 8 seats for the Latin American and Caribbean Group, and 7 seats for the Western European and other Group. The Assembly further decided that membership in the Council shall be open to all States Members of the United Nations. In accordance with resolution 60/251, members of the Council shall serve for a period of three years and shall not be eligible for immediate re-election after two consecutive terms. It is further decided that the terms of membership shall be staggered and that such decision will be taken for the first election by the drawing of lots, taking into consideration equitable geographical distribution.

Members will recall that in A/INF/60/6 there is a table showing the staggering of terms of the members of each regional group, formulated in line with past practice. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to approve the staggering of terms of the members of each regional group, as set out in that table?

It was so decided.

The President: Before proceeding further, I wish to inform members that we shall first elect the 47 members of the Human Rights Council. Immediately after the elections are completed, the Assembly will hold the drawing of lots to select from among the members already elected in each regional group those members who will serve for one year, two years and three years, respectively.

The General Assembly will now proceed to the election of the 47 members of the Human Rights Council. In accordance with resolution 60/251, the 47 Member States shall be elected directly and individually by secret ballot by the majority of the members of the General Assembly. Accordingly, for the present election, 96 votes constitute a majority in the General Assembly, which has a membership of 191 Member States.

The election will be held in accordance with the relevant rules of procedure of the General Assembly on elections. For this election, rules 92 and 94 of the Assembly's rules of procedure shall be applied. Consistent with the Assembly's practice, if more than the required number of Member States have obtained the votes of the majority of the Assembly members on the same ballot, those Member States that have obtained the largest number of votes above the required majority will be considered as elected, up to the number of seats to be filled.

Also consistent with past practice, in the case of a tie vote for a remaining seat, there will be a special, restricted ballot limited to those candidates that have obtained an equal number of votes.

May I take it that the Assembly agrees to these procedures?

It was so decided.

The President: Accordingly, the elections shall be held by secret ballot, and there shall be no nominations.

Again, I wish to repeat that the 47 seats are distributed among the regional groups as follows: 13 seats for African Group, 13 seats for the Asian group, 6 seats for the Eastern European Group, 8 seats for the Latin American and Caribbean Group, and 7 seats for the Western European and other Group. The ballot papers reflect this pattern.

As stated in resolution 60/251, when electing members of the Council, Member States shall take into account the contribution of candidates to the promotion and protection of human rights and their voluntary pledges and commitments made thereto.

Before we begin the voting process I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the Assembly's rules of procedure, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process. Ballot papers marked A, B, C, D and E will now be distributed. Ballot A has 13 blank lines for the 13 seats for the African Group; Ballot B has 13 blank lines for the 13 seats for the Asian Group; Ballot C has 6 blank lines for the 6 seats for the Eastern European Group;

Ballot D has 8 blank lines for the 8 seats for the Latin American and Caribbean Group; and Ballot E has 7 blank lines for the 7 seats for the Western European and other Group.

I request representatives to use only those ballot papers and to write on them the names of the States for which they wish to vote. A ballot paper containing more names from the relevant region than the number of seats assigned to it will be declared invalid. I repeat, a ballot paper containing more names from the relevant region than the number of seats assigned to it will be declared invalid. If a ballot paper contains names of Member States that do not belong to that region, those names will not be counted at all.

I will now pause for the distribution of ballot papers and for the writing of 47 names.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Nadjaf (Afghanistan), Ms. Burnell (Australia), Ms. Fedorovich (Belarus), Mr. Sepúlveda (Chile), Mr. Nsemi (Congo), Ms. Ioannu (Cyprus), Ms. Romulus (Haiti), Mr. Issetov (Kazakhstan), Ms. Rahantabololo (Madagascar) and Ms. Field (United States of America) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 10.55 a.m. and resumed at 1.10 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group A – African Group (13 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	191
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	191
Abstentions:	0
Required majority of members:	96
Number of votes obtained:	
Ghana	183
Zambia	182
Senegal	181
South Africa	179
Mali	178
Mauritius	178
Morocco	178
Gabon	175
Djibouti	172
Cameroon	171
Tunisia	171
Nigeria	169
Algeria	168
Kenya	9
Tanzania	1
Madagascar	1
Egypt	1

Group B – Asian Group (13 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	191
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	191
Abstentions:	1
Required majority of members:	96
Number of votes obtained:	
India	173
Indonesia	165
Bangladesh	160
Japan	158
Malaysia	158
Pakistan	149
Republic of Korea	148
China	146
Jordan	137
Philippines	136
Bahrain	134
Saudi Arabia	126
Sri Lanka	123
Thailand	120
Lebanon	112
Kyrgyzstan	88
Islamic Republic of Iran	58
Iraq	52
Qatar	1
Maldives	1

Group C – Eastern European Group (6 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	191
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	191
Abstentions:	1
Required majority of members:	96
Number of votes obtained:	
Russian Federation	137
Poland	108
Czech Republic	105
Azerbaijan	95
Lithuania	92
Slovenia	91
Ukraine	91
Romania	89
Hungary	79
Armenia	70

Latvia	50
Georgia	35
Albania	31
Serbia and Montenegro	1

Group D – Latin American and Caribbean Group (8 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	191
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	191
Abstentions:	1
Required majority of members:	96
Number of votes obtained:	
Brazil	165
Argentina	158
Mexico	154
Peru	145
Guatemala	142
Uruguay	141
Cuba	135
Ecuador	128
Nicaragua	119
Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela	101
Costa Rica	6
Honduras	3
Colombia	1

Group E – Western European and other Group (7 seats)

Number of ballot papers:	191
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	191
Abstentions:	3
Required majority of members:	96
Number of votes obtained:	
Germany	154
France	150
United Kingdom	148
Switzerland	140
Netherlands	137
Finland	133
Canada	130
Portugal	122
Greece	117
Spain	1

Having obtained the required majority and the largest number of votes, the following countries were elected members of the Human Rights Council beginning on 19 June 2006:

From the African Group: Algeria, Cameroon, Djibouti, Gabon, Ghana, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia and Zambia.

From the Asian Group: Bahrain, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia and Sri Lanka.

From the Eastern European Group: Czech Republic, Poland and Russian Federation.

From the Latin American and Caribbean Group: Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay.

From the Western European and other Group: Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The President: I congratulate the States that have been elected members of the Human Rights Council.

There remain three seats to be filled from the Eastern European Group.

The second round of balloting shall be restricted to the six States from among the Eastern European Group that were not elected but obtained the largest number of votes in the previous ballot, namely, Azerbaijan, Hungary, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia and Ukraine. That is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

In accordance with the rules of procedure, we should continue with a series of restricted ballots. However, in view of the late hour, I propose that we postpone further balloting until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

Statement by the President

The President: I would like to make an announcement regarding the Comprehensive Review and High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS, to be held from 31 May to 2 June.

I am grateful to all those member States that have to date expressed their interest in round tables at that event. It would be very helpful if remaining member States could quickly let my Office know if they would like to take part in a round table so that planning for the event can proceed without further delay.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.